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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/826,014	04/16/2004	Yasuhito Miyata	79874	9236

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EXAMINER

CULBRETH, ERIC D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

DATE MAILED: 03/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/826,014	Applicant(s) MIYATA, YASUHIITO	
	Examiner Eric Culbreth	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 April 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/16/04&9/14/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to because of the following informalities. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

- a. In Figure 3 and paragraph [0018], “A-A” should be “4-4”, as a section line should be named for the figure it represents.
- b. Regarding paragraph [0020], reference numeral 126a is not in Figure 2.
- c. In Figure 11 and in paragraph [0026] “B-B” should be “12-12”.

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the plurality of pairs of strips with overlapping ends (claim 4), roll folding (claim 16), and linear, dotted and sheet configuration (claim 20) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

- a. The specification should not refer to the claims in describing the invention (paragraphs [0004]-[0005], [0011], [0013]-[0014].
 - b. In paragraph [0005], lines 3-5 are an incomplete sentence ("is employed" should be deleted).
 - c. In paragraph [0009], lines 6-7 are an incomplete sentence.
 - d. Regarding paragraph [0027], lines 7-8, the description of Figure 5 is not accurate.
 - e. Paragraph [0020] is not accurate (the air bag is not deployed in Figure 6).
 - f. In paragraph [0029], line 5 "collided" is idiomatic (i.e., "is collided" should be "collides").
 - g. In paragraph [0039], lines 6-8 are an incomplete sentence.
 - h. Contrary to paragraph [0039], lines 8-9, Figure 4 is not an initial stage of deployment.
 - i. Contrary to paragraph [0041], last line Figure 5 is not the stored bag in the cover.
 - j. Paragraph [0048] is an incomplete sentence.
 - k. In paragraph [0051], lines 1-4 are an incomplete sentence.
- Appropriate correction is required.

4. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: There is no support in the specification for claim 4 (a

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plurality of pairs of material strips with overlapping ends; Figure 11 discloses one pair of strips with overlapping ends) nor the linear, dotted and sheet configuration of claim 20.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

6. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Since part of the bag extends to the retainer, it is not clear how a fabric can be wrapped around portion 124 (what happens when fabric 127 encounters portion 123 extending away from airbag portion 124?).

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 1-10, 17 and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

a. Claim 1 recites the invention as an airbag apparatus for a motorcycle, but the recites the airbag including a portion mounted to the handlebar. Hence, it is not clear if the invention is just the airbag apparatus or if it includes the motorcycle. For purposes of examination, the invention will be assumed to include the motorcycle.

b. Claim 3 recites the frangible portion as comprising overlapping ends. However, overlapping ends are not "frangible".

c. In claim 17, line 3 "thin is indefinite (i.e., thin compared to what).

d. Also, claim 17 is indefinite because it is an incomplete sentence.

e. Claim 19 is indefinite because overlapping ends portions are not "frangible" portions.

f. Claim 19 is also indefinite because it recites a "thinned" material portion (thinned compared to what).

g. Claim 20 is unclear because it is not clear how the frangible portion could be a sheet configuration (what does this mean).

Double Patenting

9. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422

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F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

10. Claims 1-20 as best understood are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-17 of copending Application No. 10/826,084. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both applications ultimately claim an airbag apparatus with a portion of the airbag mounted on the handlebars.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

11. Claims 1-20 as best understood are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-22 of copending Application No. 10/813,523. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both applications ultimately claim an airbag apparatus with a portion of the airbag mounted on the handlebars.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

12. Claims 1-20 as best understood are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of copending Application No. 10/800,263. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both applications ultimately claim an airbag apparatus with a portion of the airbag mounted on the handlebars.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

13. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

14. Claims 1-2, 6, 8-13, and 18-20 as best understood are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Kuroe et al US006846009B2, cited by applicant.

Regarding claim 6, as broadly recited in Figure 3 member 23 is a retainier, retaining the air bag. Regarding claim 20, tear seam 22b is a linear configuration as broadly recited (note Figure 6, where the bag deploys along a substantially linear seam).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

15. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

16. Claims 3-4 as best understood are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuroe et al in view of Seifert US006099028A.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Kuroe et al to include overlapping ends of material on the handlebar cover as taught by Seifert in Figure 3 in order to use an alternative door opening that is conventional and interchangeable in airbag technology (i.e., doors with overlapping edges that slide free are just as common in airbag art as tear seams). Claim 4 is so indefinite in view of the disclosure that the combination appears to meet the positive limitations of the claim.

Conclusion

17. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Miyata US 20040207182A1 and US 20040251664A1 are the pregrant publications of the applications cited above.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Culbreth whose telephone number is 571/272-6668. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 9:00-6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on 571/272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Eric Culbreth
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3616